

## **Important Safety Numbers**

**Plymouth County  
District Attorney's Hotline  
508-583-3306**

**Network for Women's Safety  
24 Hour Hotline  
1-800-922-2600**

**Woman's Place— Brockton  
508-588-2041**

**South Shore Women's Center  
Plymouth  
508-746-2664**

**Domestic Violence Ended  
Quincy  
617-471-1234**

**Police -Emergency  
9-1-1**

**Brockton District Court  
508-587-8000**

**Hingham District Court  
781-749-7000**

**Plymouth District Court  
508-747-0500**

**Wareham District Court  
508-295-8300**

## **Relationship Violence**



**Office of Plymouth County  
District Attorney**

## **Timothy J. Cruz**

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## **Domestic Violence Unit**

RELATIONSHIP  
VIOLENCE

**Timothy J. Cruz**  
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Plymouth County

**32 Belmont Street  
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**Tel: 508-584-8120**

## A Message from District Attorney Tim Cruz



**A**s your District Attorney, I am committed to ensuring the safety and protection of every resident of Plymouth County.

When it comes to the issue of violence, we often assume that it comes from the hands of a stranger. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Domestic Violence occurs in many homes, at the hands of the people we may know or love. A way in which we can keep our families safe, and combat this violence is by educating our communities and creating a greater awareness of Domestic Violence.

The Goal of the Domestic Violence Unit in my office is to assist and educate those who have been emotionally and physically abused through domestic violence.

If you or someone you know is in a relationship that is abusive, I urge you to call for help. Our Domestic Violence Advocates are available to assist you in obtaining a Safe Plan to ensure your safety.

There is no excuse for Domestic Violence, we all have the right to live without fear.

Sincerely,



**Timothy J. Cruz**  
District Attorney

## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of control used by one person to exert power over another. Verbal abuse, threats, physical, and sexual abuse are the methods used to maintain power and control. Domestic violence may occur in a particular pattern or may be random acts. It may happen frequently or may be a rare occurrence. Domestic violence crosses all social, economic, racial, cultural and religious boundaries. Experience indicates that the incidents of violence, and the severity of violence tends to increase over time.

Violent physical acts are criminal and the batterer can be prosecuted. Emotional abuse and insults are almost always part of the abuse pattern, but may not be criminal acts. It can be more difficult to recover from the emotional abuse; it whittles away at one's self esteem and sense of confidence.

Domestic violence is not caused or provoked by the action or inaction of the victim. Domestic violence is not directly caused by alcohol or drug abuse, depression, lack of money, lack of a job, mental illness or abuse as a child. However, existing problems often create additional stress in a relationship and may increase the risk of violence. Abusers blame the victim for their violent acts and do not take responsibility for their abusive behavior.

**The Abuse Prevention Law** offers protection to people who are physically abused and to those who are at serious risk of physical abuse. The law also protects abused housemates, roommates and same sex partners.

## 209A-Restraining Order

An Abuse Prevention Order, called a "209A" or a "Restraining Order", is a civil court action that provides immediate protection from physical or sexual harm caused by force, or threat of harm from a family or household member such as:

- a spouse or former spouse
- a present or former household member
- a relative by blood or marriage
- the parent of your minor child
- a person with whom you have had a substantial dating relationship

## How can I obtain 209A protection?

A 209A order may be obtained in any district or probate and family court in Massachusetts. An emergency 209A order can be obtained through any police department after court hours and on weekends. You do not need a lawyer to file for a 209A order.

You may apply for protection in the district or probate court which serves your community. If you find it necessary to flee your home to avoid abuse, you may go to the district or probate court serving the community where you are staying. If you need further assistance or do not know where the nearest courthouse is located, contact the local police department for assistance.

Go to the Civil Clerk's Office in any court and ask for a Restraining Order or a 209A order. You will receive the necessary forms to complete.

Ask someone at the clerk's office to direct you to the victim witness office for help.

In the courts of Plymouth County, there will be a Victim Witness Advocate from the District Attorney's Office to help you complete the paper work and to discuss the option of filing criminal charges against your abuser. You don't have to file criminal charges to obtain a 209A order. However, criminal charges may be necessary in holding a batterer responsible for acts committed against you. The advocate will assist you in preparing a safety plan.

**A Victim Witness Advocate  
is available  
by calling 508-584-8120**